

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

'LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!'—Goethe.

'WHATEVER IS, THAT MAKES MANIFEST IS LIGHT.'—Paul.

No. 1,298.—VOL. XXV. [Registered as] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1905. [a Newspaper.] PRICE TWOPENCE.

CONTENTS.

Notes by the Way	553	The Church of the Future: Address by the Rev. Dr. Cobb ...	559
L. S. A. Notices	554	Life Unlimited	561
Materialisations at Algiers	555	Good Tests of Identity	562
The Call to Meet God	556	Dreams and the Astral Body ...	562
Strange Happenings in Italy	557	'Ahrizman' Publication Fund ...	563
The Problem of Great Towns ...	558	The Problem of Evil	563
Sir Oliver Lodge and 'Dis-embodied Spirits'	559	Mrs. Green in Natal	563

NOTES BY THE WAY.

It is something of a novelty to find a President of a modern University advising the cultivation of imagination in children, and the creation around them of a Fairy tale atmosphere: but this has lately been done by President G. Stanley Hall, who seems to think that the cultivation of matter-of-fact reason alone may shut up the past and sterilise the future to the growing mind.

The interpretation of history and the forecastings of the future lie in the realm of sympathy, of imagination, of vivid expectancy and receptivity. The following might have been spoken by a transcendental Spiritualist of a very advanced type:—

The reason and even the intellect are largely individual products, but the feelings and imaginations are racial, purely human, and alone can make us citizens of all times and spectators of all events. If human evolution were finished and its *nîsus* spent, it might be otherwise, but the very existence and strength of feeling and imagination is the best proof that man is yet in the gristle, if not in the tadpole stage, and that the best history cannot yet be written because it has not happened yet. Therefore feed the fancy and the sentiments of children more, and instead of the subtle senescent insinuations of a sense of superior insight, if the supernatural is detected and challenged, make childhood as unconscious of miracle in Scripture as in Homer, so that all its idealising powers be fully developed in their nascent plastic state. Cultivate sympathy before criticism for some of the best and most marvellous lives of the saints, for interferences of the order of nature by deity. Delay rather than precociously hasten the dawn of scepticism. Develop agencies to equip teachers with a wide and, above all, well-chosen repertory of stories, and train them in the master art of telling them, as ancient bards and minstrels transmitted all that was known before print kept alive much fit only to perish, and before books so multiplied that the printed page thrusts itself between nature and the open soul. Plant deep by folk-lore methods the love of sky, stars, sun, moon, sea, forest, trees, flowers, birds, animals, as they were loved and known before they were labelled with Greek and Latin nomenclature and before laboratory and technical methods made hard the way of the soul to its proper pabulum. The religion of nature is the root of all religion in the child as it was in the race.

'The Theosophical Review' prints in large type some queer stories of children in which it finds suggestions of pre-existence. Here are two or three. A certain boy always used the word 'bankra' for lie down: and the teller of the story gravely adds, 'Could it have been a word which he brought through from his last life?' But the other (about another boy) beats even this. It is as follows:—

When he was about ten months old he was being carried down by the Thames one afternoon, and saw some dogs running into the water. He was very much distressed, crying and

saying, 'Bow-wow, bow-wow,' and could not be comforted. Is it not very probable that he or someone belonging to him had been drowned in his last life? He was quite too young to have had any idea of danger from going into the water from the experience of his present life. At present, though he has no fear of death, he has a great dislike to the idea of drowning.

Now, is not that wonderful!

Another story is told of a girl:—

She once said to a medical student: 'Do they cut off heads, too, at the hospital?' Hearing of a gentleman who had had three wives, she observed: 'Just like Henry VIII. Did he kill them, or did they die of themselves?'

She was walking in the park at Dublin with some friends, when she suddenly asked a lady *à propos* of nothing: 'Did you ever hear of Cain and Abel?'

And is not *that* wonderful?—a certain proof of reincarnation!

We have received from Messrs. Watts and Co. (Johnson's-court, Fleet-street) 'The Agnostic Annual' for 1906, a rather melancholy, if somewhat clever publication. A good deal of it is admirable, but a desperately sorrowful little poem, by Eden Phillpotts, opens the door, and reveals the skeleton in the cupboard. It is entitled 'Song of a sad heart,' and the following verses give the substance of it:—

My life's but an antic,
Half sane and half frantic,
Half good and half evil,
Half smiles and half tears;
Half dross and half treasure,
Half pain and half pleasure,
Half dreaming, half seeming,
Half hopes and half fears.

A seat in a galley,
A little blind alley,
A glimpse into being,
A leaf in the wind;
A beautiful bubble
On oceans of trouble,
A road where the sign-posts
Are all going blind.

A cradle to cry in,
A coffin to lie in—
Betwixt them I steal
Through the Fun of the Fair:
Chance calling, fate guiding
Life's round-about gliding,
Until the Grey Dustman
Surprises me there.

What an outlook upon life! Even as a possible escape from suicide, this 'sad heart' had better try a year of the Spiritualist Alliance.

Dr. M. J. Savage, on his return home to New York, lectured on the great historic gathering of Liberal Christians at Geneva, where, in the Cathedral and from Calvin's pulpit, he preached to the heretical assembly.

Referring to this, he said:—

Three hundred and fifty years ago Servetus was burned by Calvin. A few weeks ago there stood in Calvin's pulpit and preached from his intellectual and religious throne a heretic beside whom all the beliefs of Servetus were exceedingly tame and mild. Does it not mean that the world is growing and becoming broader and more human and more civilised?

He even speculated that Calvin approved, and made up his fierce quarrel with the old-time heresy. A friend had asked him whether he did not think that his appearance in Calvin's pulpit had made Calvin turn over in his coffin. I think not, said Dr. Savage. He even suggested that he was out of his coffin altogether, and happily present. 'I think if Calvin was there,' he said, 'and I hope he was, that I may suppose he has changed his mind somewhat in the clearer light of another life and in the three hundred and fifty years that have passed; and, rather than think of him as turning over in his coffin, if he was there at all, I believe that he stood behind me and held out his hand over me in generous benediction. So, at any rate, I love to believe.'

Moved thereto by the latest Report of 'The Christian Movement in its relation to the new life in Japan,' 'Harper's Weekly' takes a survey of the chances of Christianity in Japan, and comes to the conclusion that even if she accepts our Western Christianity in any sense it will be with a difference. The following passage, however, expresses the novel opinion that the Japanese are specially ripe for the original and unadapted form of Christianity:—

Presumably there will be minor sects wherever there is Christianity, but Japan, if she has them, will be likely to develop her own. Christianity has adjusted itself more or less to the character, history, and primitive institutions of all the Western peoples who have accepted it. It is conceivable that its adjustment to the Japanese would be easy and perfect beyond any precedent. It is an Asiatic religion offered to an Asiatic people, for the Japanese are still Asiatics, though unlike all the rest. Self-abnegation, idealism, the sacrifice of the present to the future—of ease, and even life, to duty—seem to come more natural to the Asiatic mind than to the Western mind. Moreover, the religions of Confucius and of Buddha, which have helped to civilise Japan, are great religions, holding many truths of philosophy and ethics in common with the religion of Christ. No nation seems ever to have been so favourably situated to consider and compare the great religions of the world, and choose the best, as is Japan to-day. Nothing can be forced upon her. She knows the defects of her own religious systems; she can look abroad and study the fruits of every other system, and if she finds a better one can take so much of it as she thinks is true.

SPIRITUAL PRAYERS

(From many shrines.)

Most holy angels, ye great and good and beautiful souls who have made earth the heaven it is fast becoming, hear our prayers! Unable to comprehend an Infinite Mind, we offer our supplications to you. Great souls that have blessed the world, condescend to bless us. Martyrs, heroes, patriots—ye who have inspired in all times the hearts of men—give us your sympathy, your love, your wisdom, in this hour. Mighty ones of years gone by—Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha—all ye that have gone before us, understanding the experiences of the life which we live, and the richer, riper wisdom of the life beyond, be unto us the angels of the Father whom we cannot comprehend, and bestow upon us your inspiration—bestow on us your blessing. From the deep ocean of your spiritual life let flow upon us the waters of a celestial baptism. Reach down from the heaven above us the white hand of angel inspiration, and guide us through the scenes of earth life to a heaven of restful labour evermore. Come to us Socrates, Plato, Mahomet, Washington, Channing, Elizabeth Browning, Theodore Parker—all who have lived, all who have suffered, all who have inherited angelic life and passed into the inner court of the temple of the Infinite. Come to us and bring to-day the holy shewbread of the sanctuary, and break it to feed the multitude of the present age. Hear us as we ask for strength and wisdom; and give, in answer to our prayer for help, that assistance which you well know is our necessity. Amen.

LONDON SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE, LTD.

A meeting of the Members and Associates of the Alliance will be held in the Salon of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall East (near the National Gallery), on

THURSDAY EVENING NEXT, NOVEMBER 30TH,

WHEN AN ADDRESS WILL BE GIVEN

BY

MR. W. L. WILMSHURST

ON

'The Scientific Apprehension of the Super-physical World.'

The doors will be opened at 7 o'clock, and the Address will be commenced punctually at 7.30.

Admission by ticket only. Two tickets are sent to each Member, and one to each Associate, but both Members and Associates can have additional tickets for the use of friends on payment of 1s. each. Applications for extra tickets, accompanied by remittance, should be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Secretary to the London Spiritualist Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

Dec. 14.—REV. J. TYSSUL-DAVIS, B.A., on 'Nature's Thought Forms.' With Lantern Illustrations by slides specially prepared for the occasion. At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

1906.

Jan. 11.—MR. E. WAKE COOK, on 'Christian Science in the Light of Modern Spiritualism.' At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

Feb. 8.—MR. FREDERIC W. THURSTAN, M.A., on 'Some Things we Want for Ideal Investigation.' At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

Feb. 22.—MRS. W. P. BROWNE, MRS. M. H. WALLIS, MR. GEO. SPRIGGS, AND REAR-ADMIRAL W. USBORNE MOORE, on 'Some Notable Personal Experiences.' At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

Mar. 8.—THE REV. LUCKING TAVENER, on 'Modern Art—the Spiritual Element in the Works of Blake, Rossetti, Burne Jones, and Watts'; with Lantern Illustrations. At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

Mar. 29.—MR. J. W. BOULDING, on 'Shakespeare and Spiritualism; with Illustrations from Personal Experiences.' At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

April 12.—THE REV. J. PAGE HOPPS, on 'The Holy Ghost the Comforter.' At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

April 26.—THE REV. J. HUNTER, D.D., on 'The Modern Revival of Interest and Faith in the so-called Supernatural.' At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

May 10.—MR. L. STANLEY JAST, on 'The Spiritual Significance of Symbols.' At 7 p.m. for 7.30.

MEETINGS FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF CLAIRVOYANCE will be given at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., by Mrs. Ridley, on Tuesday next, the 28th inst., at 3 p.m., and no one will be admitted after that hour. Fee 1s. each to Members and Associates; for friends introduced by them, 2s. each.

DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASES.—Mr. George Spriggs kindly places his valuable services in the diagnosis of diseases at the disposal of the Council, and for that purpose will attend at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., on Thursday afternoon, December 7th, between the hours of 1 and 3. Members, Associates, and friends who are out of health, and who desire to avail themselves of Mr. Spriggs's offer, should notify their wish in writing to the secretary of the Alliance, Mr. E. W. Wallis, not later than the previous Monday, stating the time when they can attend, so that an appointment can be arranged. No fee is charged, but Mr. Spriggs suggests that every consultant should make a contribution of at least 5s. to the funds of the Alliance.

PSYCHIC CULTURE.—Mr. Frederic Thurstan, M.A., will kindly conduct classes for Members and Associates at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., for psychic culture and home development of mediumship, on Thursday next, November 30th, and on December 14th. Time, from 5 o'clock to 6 p.m., and visitors are requested to be in their places not later than 4.55. There is no fee or subscription.

SPIRIT CONTROL.—Mrs. M. H. Wallis will attend at the rooms of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C., for conversation with her spirit control, on Friday next, December 1st, at 3 p.m., prompt. *Visitors should come prepared with written questions*, on subjects of general interest relating to Spiritualism, mediumship, and life here and hereafter. These meetings are free to Members and Associates, who may also introduce non-members on payment of 1s. each.

THE MATERIALISATIONS AT ALGIERS.

'The Annals of Psychological Science' for November gives the main portion of Professor Richet's description of the materialisation phenomena witnessed by him at Algiers during the summer, with photographs showing the appearances, also comments by Sir Oliver Lodge on the photographs, and by Madame X., one of the investigators, on the whole series of phenomena from her own point of view, as she had been staying with General and Madame Noël for some time before Professor Richet's arrival.

The manifestations are well worthy of careful study in the pages of the 'Annals' itself, but we may say that the general conclusions come to by Professor Richet, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Madame X. are that, under the circumstances, there can be no suspicion of any fraud; the photographs represent what was actually seen by the sitters, and these appearances could not have been fraudulently produced, because this would involve the smuggling into the room of a quantity of apparatus and drapery under circumstances that prohibit any such suspicion.

There are, however, certain difficulties noted by the various writers, and they are such as are frequently met with in cases of materialisation; thus the face of the form seen was often not unlike that of the medium, with the addition of a heavy moustache, and sometimes a beard also. Again, the sleeve of the medium, stretched out towards another person who was in the cabinet, appears almost empty, though a very slender arm may be imagined to be in it. These two difficulties, and others, are faced by Professor Richet and Madame X. in a fair and open manner, with reference to the supposition that material is in some way taken from the medium in order to build up the form. It has been noticed in other cases that mediums appear very much shrunken while a form is materialised.

Madame X. makes some remarks which in themselves almost constitute a theory of apparent, but involuntary, fraud which is generally applicable to phenomena of this class, and should be carefully considered by all who wish to form a just judgment under circumstances of admitted difficulty. After noting that at times phenomena such as the waving of a hand were observed outside the cabinet while she herself was within the cabinet, holding the medium's hands, and that at other times any relaxation of control on her part was taken advantage of, 'and the phenomena of speech and touch simulated by the sleeping medium,' she says: 'It seemed to me as though a constant effort were put forth to avoid labour of some kind; something seemed to be in a state of acute watchfulness, as though desirous of effecting an economy of the unknown force producing the results.' In one case it is said that, through lack of force at the end of a long sitting, 'the exhausted medium was most probably hypnotised into simulating reality by this tiresomely reiterated request for the very phenomena simulated. It was a pure automatism, and a clumsy one too.' In fact, all these writers recognise that an appearance of clumsy fraud is not consistent with the consummate art that would be needed to fabricate the whole manifestations, even if that were possible. We thus find that suspicious actions on the part of the medium may often be caused by the desire of the intelligence manifesting to comply with the request for phenomena; and we need not assume that this implies deception on the part of the intelligence, who may not be able to determine the exact manner in which the manifestation shall take place on the physical plane. We therefore welcome this explanation as going far to relieve both medium and manifestant from the onus of conscious and deliberate deception in certain doubtful cases.

After a careful analysis of the circumstances and the photographs, Professor Richet considers that in spite of some unexplained details the absence of fraud is demonstrated; the apparent emptiness of the medium's sleeve he puts down to 'a sort of material disaggregation of the medium, which she herself was incapable of suspecting.' But, he says:—

'I do not wish to go any further into theory at present. I do not even wish to hazard an affirmation of the phenomenon. In spite of all the proofs which I have given, of all that I have seen and touched, of the photographs, conclusive as they are, I cannot yet resolve on admitting this fact of materialisation; it is too much to ask of a physiologist to expect him to accept, even after much experimentation, a fact so extraordinary and improbable, and I shall not yield so easily, even to evidence.'

'However, I have thought it my duty to mention these facts, in the same way as Sir William Crookes thought it his duty, in more difficult times, to report the history of "Katie King." After all it may be that I have been deceived. But the explanation of such an error would be of considerable importance. And then—need I say it?—I do not believe that I have been deceived. I am convinced that I have been present at realities, not at deceptions. Certainly I cannot say in what materialisation consists; I am only ready to maintain that there is something profoundly mysterious in it, which will change from top to bottom our ideas on nature and on life.'

And yet he 'cannot resolve on admitting the fact of materialisation'! The juxtaposition of these two paragraphs is perhaps the most 'extraordinary and improbable fact' of all!

In the November number of the 'Annals of Psychological Science' is an article by Madame X., relating her very interesting experiences during the notable séances which Professor Richet reports in the earlier pages; and in particular I would draw attention to a passage on p. 301. After stating her conviction that whilst holding the medium's hands within her own she had felt touches from some unseen hand, she adds that she was also aware that *sometimes* the phenomena of voice and touch were simulated by the sleeping medium. 'It seemed to me,' she says, 'as though a constant effort were put forth to avoid labour of some kind. Something seemed to be in a state of *qui vive*, as though desirous of effecting an economy of the unknown force which was producing the abnormal results I was experiencing.' Madame X. then goes on to relate an instance in which something was said to her through the medium, who appeared to simulate the unseen operator. 'However, when I became aware of this simulacra,' she adds, 'I would lay my head against Marthe's, or put my hand on her lips, and then ask "B. B." (the control) to give his instructions himself, and not through Marthe. I nearly always received what I asked for, though often only after waiting some considerable time.'

Those who have read the whole account of these séances and recognise that the common theory of fraud is an absurd explanation will be puzzled by this curious circumstance; and I should like to suggest that there may be an even simpler explanation than that of the endeavour to economise force.

In a number of 'LIGHT' published a year or two ago, I suggested that since the unseen operator ostensibly acts through suggestion and uses some force emanating from the medium to give effect to his suggestions, and since the medium's brain is during these séances in a condition of abnormal sensitiveness to suggestion, it is probably extremely difficult to produce the desired effect of sound or motion without at the same time producing what is the habitual response to any suggestion, that is to say, without moving the tongue to speak, or causing the other muscles to move. How much caution may be requisite on the part of the unseen operator, or how far he may be unaware of the physical, normal response which the medium may on a given occasion have made to his mental suggestions, we cannot tell.

The unseen operator, we will suppose, intends to speak by direct voice, but that sensitive instrument, the medium's brain, at once registers this thought wave, with the result that the muscles normally respond, and to the observer the effect looks like fraud or pure automatism.

On one occasion when a relative of my own was in trance we heard a voice utter the name 'Annie,' and thinking it might possibly be a 'direct' voice we inquired if this were so; we were told, 'No,' that 'Annie' meant to try and speak with the direct voice, but getting into material conditions confused her and she had used the medium's voice by mistake.

H. A. DALLAS.

MRS. EFFIE BATHE's next invitation meeting for inquirers will be held on Tuesday, December 5th, at 8 p.m. For full particulars see 'LIGHT' of November 11th.

THE CALL TO MEET GOD.

The following sermon by the Rev. John Page Hopps was preached at Little Portland-street Chapel on Sunday morning, November 5th.

'Prepare to meet thy God.'—Amos iv., 12.

A very few Sundays ago, one of our oldest members worshipped with us for the last time. She has been promoted to the world of light beyond these shadows. She has found the realities beyond these changeable and unsubstantial things. Words of congratulation would almost be right for us; for the body had become a burden, and continuing here only meant grief and pain. From that she has been rescued: 'Blessed be the name of the Lord!'

But the passing on always has its solemn side, and I feel moved to be mindful of that to-day: and so invite you to consider this serious monition of the old Hebrew prophet, 'Prepare to meet thy God.'

This monition, as the prophet used it, did not refer to what we call 'death,' but only to the bringing of Israel into judgment for its sins. Time out of mind, however, it has been used, and rightly used, with regard to death, and so I will use it to-day; but not as it has been the custom to use it—for depression or dread. I would rather use it for encouragement and for joy.

It is simply a call to stand ready;—not, indeed, as those who think more about the future than the present, or who forget their duties in their anticipations, but as those who feel that it is not wise to go on the greatest of all journeys without knowing anything of their destination or of the way. It is, therefore, only the counsel of common prudence—'Prepare to meet thy God.' And yet it becomes us to observe that this monition can very easily be mistaken and misapplied. If, for instance, we are led by it to imagine that we are not in God's presence now; or if we postpone the judgment to some future scene; or if we call up before the eye of the soul any image of a person whom we shall meet, the whole thing may become, not a rational piece of wise forethought, but an irrational and pernicious superstition. For it becomes us to remember that we are in God's presence now,—that this is God's world, that we stand every day at His judgment bar, and that we have no reason to suppose that we shall ever see Him in any other way than we do now. In receiving this charge, then, there is no demand made upon us for the surrender of reason or knowledge or the calm mind. We must, even in this, go by what we can see and feel to be the truth; for our way will be bright, our trust will be deep, our faith will be unshaken, our preparation will be thorough, only as we are led by what we do see and know.

In the first place, then, it is obvious that if we are to prepare to meet God, there must be a God. Is this a bare assumption? Is it a mystery so deep that it can never become an object of the understanding? To both these questions I answer, No. The existence of God is not bare assumption, and that existence can become an object of the understanding. The mode of that existence, the conditions of that mighty life, are, indeed, beyond our vision, but not the existence and the life themselves. When I look on the world in which I live, and reflect on the history of mankind, and gaze upon the heavens filled with millions of worlds that baffle the sublimest minds; when I think that all the forces of Nature are beyond our control, that all we have to do is to use what we find and fall in with what is fixed; when I further reflect that, amid all our changes, Nature remains the same, and that the more we see and know the more clearly do we perceive that there is failure nowhere, but order, unity and harmony everywhere—that we are but the poor creatures of a day, unable to control anything, and only able to win a little good by obeying the eternal law that was here before we came and that will be here long after we are gone—then it is a necessity of my nature that I shall attribute to the great law-maker, the great law-preserver, the great creator, the great harmoniser, the great sustainer, an intellectual existence. It is not I, it is the universe that

demands a God. Where He is, what He is, whence He came, how He works, I may not know. But then, I really do not know what I am, or whence I came, or how I think and act. Enough for me that, just as I can see signs of life below me, so I can see signs of life above me—proofs positive that there is a force, and an order, and a continuity of harmony, and a unity, and a majesty, and a beauty, with which neither I nor my fellow creatures have anything to do; enough for me that there is a vast life above me, that this life is *one*, and that a necessity of my nature compels me to attribute to it knowledge, forethought, intention, and will. To me, then, that mighty life is no longer *it*, but Him; and Him we call God.

That leads me to the second thought suggested by this monition: that this God is our God—your God and my God. It is not 'Prepare to meet *God*,' but 'Prepare to meet *thy* God.' In Him you live and move and have your being. Is not that more than a pious saying? Is it not a literal fact? Are you not a part of the mighty order? Are you not a recipient of the universal tide of being? King or beggar, is not the process of Nature the same for all? If by some awful catastrophe the inhabitants of this great nation were suddenly to be swept away, all but the poorest man in it, would not the sun shine, and the rain fall, and the dews distil their sweetness, and the pure air come from sea and mountain, all for *him*, and all the same? Or if the fate I imagine for this nation were the fate of the world, and only one man were left, would it be any more true of him than now that God would be his God? With startling emphasis, indeed, it might then be said to such an one, the *solitary* tenant of a world, 'Prepare to meet thy God'; but it would be no truer than it is now, for every one of us is now the recipient of the breath of life by which we all live and move and have our being. Whatever, then, this mighty life of the Universe is, wherever and whatever God may be, you are a part of His great order, you are the recipient of His life, you sustain a daily and hourly relation to the sublime harmony of which you form a part, you are a centre towards which and from which tides of the universal life ebb and flow. He is, therefore—as though you stood alone—your God.

This monition also implies that you are going to meet Him. The meeting is not doubtful. You are only advised to prepare. In one sense the charge is to be observed now, for we meet Him every day; and every day preparation may be made. But, in another sense, it is true that we are going to meet Him as we have never met Him yet. I have already said that we have no right to imagine that we shall ever see God otherwise than we do here,—that is, through what He does. But what we may expect is a knowledge of His works, and the enjoyment of perceptions and conditions as unlike these that are ours to-day as light is unlike darkness. On the assumption that we shall live again, that there really is no death, that the event called death is simply departure from the flesh and from fleshly conditions, it is the most likely thing in the world that we shall rise to the possession of faculties, and be surrounded with conditions of being, and have an insight into the works of God, of which we now know nothing,—it is the most likely thing in the world that the passage into the spirit-world will be a passage into light, and into a set of circumstances which will be equivalent to the deliverance of the real man from a dark prison,—the prison-house of the flesh. In that case, how beautiful, how natural, how perfectly rational the counsel,—'Prepare to meet thy God!' Prepare, not for a fabled judgment-bar, and a sensational trial, and a final and irrevocable verdict, but prepare for the great change of conditions, for the brighter light, for the vaster powers, for the nearer access to the essences and vital forces of things, for a closer knowledge of the works and ways of God, which will come with what we now call 'death.'

And now, last of all, the monition implies that we can prepare to meet Him. There is no mysticism in this. It is simply equivalent to the assertion that we can prepare for all life's changes and advances. The child can prepare for the time of youth, the youth for manhood, and manhood for old age. We are always preparing for the coming stages in this strange life-journey;—unless, indeed, we live the

heedless lives of the utterly unconcerned. If, then, we can, in childhood, prepare for youth; and if, in youth, we can lay the foundations for true manhood; and if, in manhood, we can prepare for the needs of age, surely it is possible for us to prepare for the next step,—the step into the land of the vaster day. Here, then, comes the question,—and a great and grave question it is,—How can we prepare to meet our God, amid the new conditions of the new world?

The attempt to answer this question seems to me like the attempt of a poor child of earth to speak the language of heaven, and yet the attempt must be made. Would to God that some bright citizen of that unseen world could draw nigh to us and save us at once from our guesses and our fears! But the good God is educating us in His own way; and it seems to be a part of His plan that we should think alone and find Him out for ourselves.

I will not attempt to go far this morning, but will suggest four thoughts which seem to lie on the surface. And, first, it must be clear that it will help us to prepare for the great change if we accustom the mind to expect it. I do not mean by this that we should for ever be thinking of the change that must come, but what I mean is that we should think of it enough to make it not a startling thing, that we should try to think calmly and hopefully of the impending transition, and that we should not always push the subject from us as something to be forcibly avoided. We know very little of the unseen life, but it is quite easy to imagine that, to the spirit which is quite unprepared for the change by previous reflection, that change will involve all the distress and pain that attend bewilderment and the shock of a great surprise.

If you knew that, at any moment, one who had a right to command, and whom, at all events, you could not resist, might send for you, to go to some foreign land, would it not be wise to accustom your mind to the thought of the departure that might come soon, and that must come sooner or later? And, in like manner, why should you not accustom yourself to think of this great journey?

This suggests the second thought,—that we may prepare for this transition by holding all earthly things with a slack hand. I believe, if we knew all about it, we should see that there is a very profound and even awful fact here. Just imagine what it must be for a man to pass into the other world whose whole soul is devoted to this! Imagine what it must be for the drunkard, for the man given to base delights, for the man absorbed in making money, in a word, for those the fibres of whose whole being cling with fierce tenacity to the things of earth! Men talk of hell and of its torments. I know of none that might surpass the horrors of a forcible separation of the earthly soul from these things of earth. The drunkard's spirit, with all its fiery cravings; the sensualist's spirit, with all its base desires; the avaricious spirit, with all its hungry eagerness,—snatched from the body and from the gratifications that have so long fed the soul's debased desires—what other hell is needed? The words of Paul, 'Set your mind on things that are above,' contain as much philosophy as piety, and as much common-sense as religion. If the great journey I spoke of just now were before you, you would hold everything with a slackened grasp; you would not twine yourself, body and soul, around the things of the present scene; you would, by wise forethought, prepare to meet the change. So is he wise who, while enjoying all there is to enjoy here, and entering, heart and soul, into all the activities of the present scene, stands ready to let all go when the summons comes. Happy he; for he will not know the pangs of a sad surprise, and the agonies of a forced separation from all that his soul can enjoy or understand.

The third suggestion is that we may prepare to meet our God (in the sense of meeting the new conditions of the new world) by doing faithfully and patiently the duty that is ours while here. I should like to lay emphasis on this. Do to-day's work well: it will help you to meet the work of to-morrow. A laborious, studious youth-time makes a wise and capable manhood. So, a good life here will be the best preparation for whatever is to come after. What is there that you can do here and now? Do it with all your might—while you can. Is

there any temptation to conquer? any evil passion to overcome? any ambition to consecrate? any good work for another to do? I charge you to commence now; for so, and only so, can you prepare to meet your God. It is not your creed, or your sacramental performances, or your prayers, or your church that can help you in this momentous matter;—one evil habit conquered, one good desire enthroned in your heart, one noble deed done, is worth them all. For when you take the last great step into the mighty unseen you will find your condition determined, not by what you thought, or what you believed, or what you said, but by what you have sought, and loved, and done.

And now, finally, you may prepare to meet your God by cherishing the desire to be held at His disposal. Perhaps this is the best preparation of all. 'I go into Thy unseen world, O my God, but I am not afraid, for I go to Thee.' That is the highest expression of readiness. 'I know not whither I go, nor who will receive me, but I am ready, for I trust in Thee. Behold me, Father! and do with me what seemeth good unto Thee.'

May we all come to this supreme victory of trust and preparation! Then indeed will it be 'light at eventide.'

STRANGE HAPPENINGS IN ITALY.

The Roman paper 'Il Messaggero' for November 16th reports a number of strange events at Ruvo, near Bari, in Southern Italy, which include the frequent transportation of two boys over considerable distances in a very short time. The phenomena began in 1901 with violent commotions among the furniture of a building contractor, Signor Mauro Pansini, who lived in a very old house next door to the municipal hall. One evening his son Alfredo, aged seven, became entranced and spoke in a voice not his own, saying that he was sent to drive away the malign spirits. He afterwards spoke in French, Latin, and Greek, and recited long passages from Dante; sometimes as many as twelve different voices spoke through him.

On the boy being sent to a seminary he ceased to be controlled, but on his return home last year, at the age of ten, a new series of phenomena commenced. He and a younger brother, aged eight, were repeatedly carried, in a few minutes, from one town or village to another, and had to be conveyed home. The case was investigated by Dr. R. Cotugno, of the hospital at Ruvo, but he could only account for the 'doubling of personality,' not for the later phenomena. He wished to send the boys to Professor Bianchi to be further examined, but the parents would not consent.

The priests having failed to stop the manifestations, an evangelical pastor was applied to, and through the elder boy, while in trance, he obtained the allegation that the manifestant was the spirit of a man who had died in the house, and that he believed that what he did was by God's command! Asked how the boys were taken from place to place, the control replied that he had a horse on which he could go to Rome or America in five minutes; also that he dematerialised the bodies and restored them again.

One of the most remarkable cases is said to have occurred on November 9th; at 2 p.m. the boys were at Ruvo, and at 2.15 they were at Bari, where the Archbishop took them to the police authorities. The distance is about twenty miles.

It is said that all these sudden removals are announced beforehand, so that the boys know when they are to take place. These phenomena are very distressing to the whole family, and have caused considerable loss to Signor Pansini.

This story from Rome is wonderful enough, — 'too wonderful for belief,' the majority will say; but it is quite in harmony with 'Holy Writ.' In the Acts of the Apostles (viii. 39) we read: 'And when they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing; but Philip was found (or found himself) at Azotus,'—miles and miles away;—a clear case of levitation and transportation.

OFFICE OF 'LIGHT,' 110, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
LONDON, W.C.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25th, 1905.

Light,

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

PRICE TWOPENCE WEEKLY.

COMMUNICATIONS intended to be printed should be addressed to the Editor, Office of 'LIGHT,' 110, St. Martin's-lane, London, W.C. Business communications should in all cases be addressed to Mr. E. W. Wallis, Office of 'LIGHT,' and not to the Editor. Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to Mr. E. W. Wallis, and should invariably be crossed '— & Co.'

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.—'LIGHT' may be had free by post on the following terms:—Twelve months, 10s. 10d.; six months, 5s. 5d. Payments to be made in advance. To United States, 2dol. 70c. To France, 13 francs 86 centimes.

'LIGHT' may also be obtained from MESSRS. SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT AND CO., LTD., 4, Ave Maria-lane, London, and through all Newsagents and Booksellers.

APPLICATIONS by Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd., for the loan of books from the Alliance Library, should be addressed to the Librarian, Mr. B. D. Godfrey, Office of the Alliance, 110, St. Martin's-lane, W.C.

THE PROBLEM OF GREAT TOWNS.

More and more complicated grows the problem of the swarming of men into great cities: and darker and darker becomes the shadow that enshrouds it. It is not only a question of poverty, but much more a question of the ethical and spiritual drift of the great city's life. The simplicity of the life of the village, or the moderate pace of everything in the small town, inevitably disappears in the great city. Competition is keener; the rush is greater; excitement runs higher; and the bidding for speed and sensationalism increases with the roar of many voices and the tramp of a million feet. The theatres, the music halls, the gin palaces, the newspapers and the clubs, all take on an eagerness, a fever of excitement, a note of exaggeration, altogether new, while the churches are either deserted or bewildered, and know not what to do.

But, beneath all, there is a moan like the moan of the deep sea before a storm. It is the moan of the isolated in the midst of a crowd, and of struggling classes left too much to their fate by the prosperous, the masterful, and the strong. In a word, there is a violation or a neglect of the deep spiritual law which makes the 'Am I my brother's keeper?' of Cain, the most dangerous and deadly of blasphemies.

We have been led to these thoughts by a perusal of Dr. J. B. Paton's persuasive Manchester Address on 'A Civic League: social and educational.' He traces, with rare knowledge and skilled workmanship, the causes of the rise of great cities. The last century gave birth to two vast revolutions: the first, in France, was political; the second, chiefly in Great Britain, was industrial. Electrical, mechanical and chemical discoveries, and the application of steam to mechanical devices, awakened enormous energies, not only in matter but in man, and the swarming of men into towns and cities began.

Fifty years ago only, half the population of England was in country places. In 1901, 77 per cent. of the people of England and Wales were in the towns. Probably to-day the proportions are 20 per cent. in the country and 80 per cent. in the towns. It is in this fact we have to find the unspeakably serious problem of city life.

We indicated, at the beginning, our belief that the problem was an ethical and spiritual as well as an economic one. The two revolutions to which we have referred 'gave rise,' says Dr. Paton, 'to a strong and sometimes terrible individualism which was dyed in selfishness; and there awoke, as never before in the world's history, a fierce

competition among those who were delivered from the yoke of old conventions binding them to a fixed station in life, and were thus set free to struggle with their fellows to gain the most of the material wealth that accumulated around them.' It is that which constitutes the chief social danger of the century. The moral driving power of the commercial machine to-day is sheer selfishness; and we should say that, even if we did not believe it to be morally wrong; and, in a sense, it is not wrong on our present social lines. Industrialism, as at present understood, is, and probably must be, based on selfishness; and 'supply and demand,' of labour and everything else, must be the law of its activity. Other social lines might alter this, but we are discussing things as they are.

What then can be done to alleviate this selfishness, and to remedy some of its consequences? Dr. Paton's answer is:—Create in every town and city 'A Civic League.' Develop a social conscience, and let it grow into a municipal conscience. The problem is: How can these cities become the homes of a healthy, happy, industrious and noble people? Looking round upon the seething life of our great cities, we are compelled to admit that we see how they are becoming a menace not only to the form of civilisation they have created but to the very existence of multitudes that inhabit them. We agree with Dr. Paton when he says:—

It is mere ostrich-like cowardice and blindness that will not face the truth, and see the swift deterioration that falls upon masses of the people in the insanitary homes and the sordid squalor of the slums of our great cities. There may be fuller and freer life in our cities; but for vast numbers it is life that burns with a fierce fever-heat, and we witness all around the wastage and wreckage which it entails. Macaulay had a prophet's vision when he warned us that the Huns and Vandals who, if no great reform is made, will destroy the Christian States of Europe, are being bred, not in the wilds of Asia, but in the slums of our great cities.

This problem, then, of our city life must be solved, or our national well-being, if not our existence, is imperilled. The civilisation of which we boast is at stake.

In Dr. Paton's opinion, there has arrived a new spirit which may solve the problem. It is dawning upon some of us that we are in very deed 'members one of another.' 'Towns and cities are no longer regarded as mere aggregates of units, jarring and warring with each other, but are seen to have a corporate life, in which each one somehow or other affects the life of the whole body, and the whole body is felt to have responsibility for the health and welfare of all its members': and it is upon the perception of this that Dr. Paton hopes for the success of the 'Civic League.' 'A social conscience' is being created. Instead of selfish competition, there is a feeling after co-operation. Multitudes are anxious and restless, and are ripe for some wide and generous plan for dealing with the poverty, helplessness and viciousness of our great cities.

Such a plan requires the organisation of unpaid co-operators whose object it would be, as in Bradford it is, to thoroughly overhaul the whole community, in such a way as to put poverty, helplessness and vice under the supervision of appointed visitors responsible to the head of each district. Beyond this, the 'Civic League' should aim at the improvement of the town or city, concerning itself with everything bearing upon its health or attractiveness, with a view to the elimination and prevention of slums.

All this Dr. Paton bases upon a whole-hearted awakening to the spirit of Christ's Christianity, though a large number of those who would willingly accept and work at his ideal might find motives and guidance elsewhere. But the appeal to Christ has force in it. We call this a Christian country, and many even profess to believe that Christ is our God, but he might well say of the majority of us, 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say!'

A certain German philosopher once said that Christianity is the sacrifice of this world for the next, or the giving up of certain pleasures here in order to enjoy greater pleasures hereafter. "In this satiric, stinging epigram," says Dr. Paton, "he condenses into one brief sentence what he conceived to be the essential principle of Christianity. If that were so, Christianity stands condemned as a doctrine of sheer, unadulterated selfishness."

But the reverse is true. The Christianity of Christ is the killing of egotism, in the longing to seek and to save that which is lost: and, when it really takes possession of the 'believer,' the result is the passionate cry, 'Here am I; send me!'

'We dream with longing of the New Jerusalem above,' says Dr. Paton, 'that we may enter there its pearly gates; but a nobler task has been given us. Behold the vision of the prophet: "Lo, I saw the New Jerusalem coming down to earth" to be builded here. Prepare, then, the way of the Lord, restore the waste places of this city, and make it a city fit to be the dwelling-place, the tabernacle, of your God.'

SIR OLIVER LODGE AND 'DISEMBODIED SPIRITS.'

At a late meeting of students at Birmingham University, Sir Oliver Lodge discoursed on 'Cases of Ultrnormal Lucidity.' He told a story of a Frenchwoman who, having no knowledge of Greek, nevertheless, when in trance, 'wrote a number of intelligible and identifiable sentences, some in ancient and some in modern Greek.' At the close of the discourse, one of the professors satirically asked whether it was argued that some 'disembodied spirit' had prompted the lady: whereupon, so 'The Daily Chronicle' report runs, 'Sir Oliver Lodge emphatically objected to the phrase "disembodied spirit," which, he said, had never been made use of by himself or any member of the Psychical Research Society.'

We are amazed. Sir Oliver must have been taken off his guard, and 'spoken unadvisedly with his lips.' The late Mr. Myers used the phrase or its equivalent frequently. In his great work (Section 634), he wrote, 'Precognition may be explained, if you will, as telepathy from disembodied spirits,' and again (Section 975), 'If, as our present evidence indicates, this telepathic intercourse can subsist between embodied and disembodied souls, that law must, &c.'

We could, if necessary, add to these specimens, and, if we mistake not, Dr. Hodgson and Sir Oliver himself have used phrases which, at all events, sailed very near to the wind.

MR. J. J. MORSE.—We have received £1 from Mr. T. Ritchie, and 10s. 6d. from Mr. L. Weber, as contributions to the fund for Mr. J. J. Morse, which makes the total amount now received £77 14s. 6d.

DR. HODGSON'S BELIEF IN SPIRITS.—'I cannot profess to have any doubt but that the chief "communicators," to whom I have referred in the foregoing pages, are veritably the personalities that they claim to be, that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us whom we call living, through Mrs. Piper's entranced organism.'—S. P. R. 'Proceedings,' Vol. XIII., 1897-8, pages 405-6.

AUTOMATIC WRITINGS IN GERMAN.—The Baroness Adeline von Vay has recently published, through R. Lechner, of Vienna, a volume entitled 'Bilder aus dem Jenseits' (Pictures from the Beyond), consisting of a series of automatically written communications from her spirit guides, and especially from Hans Christian Andersen. As might be expected, those given by the great writer of fairy stories consist mainly of tales embodying moral teachings, usually cast in the form of experiences narrated to him by other spirits. There are also expositions of scripture by 'Laurentius' and remarks on various religious beliefs and observances, from an evangelical point of view. Here and there short chapters are interspersed, bearing on life in the spirit world. At times of great calamities, such as war, fire, or shipwreck, we are told that thousands of spirit helpers flock to the scene; also that in case of sudden death, without warning or preparation, the astral body is imperfectly formed, and has to be tended in a spirit hospital until the soul can recover from the shock and mould a complete body for itself.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

ADDRESS BY THE REV. DR. COBB.

On Thursday evening, November 16th, an address was delivered by the Rev. W. F. Cobb, D.D. (Rector of the Church of St. Ethelburga the Virgin, Bishopsgate Within, London, E.C.), to a large number of Members and Associates of the London Spiritualist Alliance in the rooms of the Royal Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, the Rev. J. Page Hopps, in the absence of the President, occupying the chair.

In his opening remarks the Rev. J. Page Hopps said:—

'I invite you to give a cordial welcome to the lecturer for this evening,—Dr. Cobb, Rector of that delightfully quaint old church in the City, St. Ethelburga's. His subject also is a welcome one. Whether we like it or not, the Church as an Institution is here to stay: and by "the Church" I do not only mean Dr. Cobb's Church, but the Church Universal: and it is for us, as Spiritualists, to wish to see it spiritualised. There is great room for it. We want to see, in the Church, the marriage of the rational and the spiritual. All the churches except the Church of Rome have suffered from the exclusion of the spiritual. The Church of Rome has always borne witness to the presence of or, at all events, to belief in the presence of spiritual powers,—in the Eucharist, in the use of Holy Water, in the mediumship of the priest, in such signs as the stigmata, and in powers of spirit healing. And now Sir Oliver Lodge is drawing attention to some of these so-called "miracles" as being on the verge of proved true by scientific experiments. And the Bishop of London has been waking up the clergy with longing glances at the spiritual healings of Christian Science. It is indeed strange that in order to find testimony to the working of spiritual powers we should be forced into the Church of Rome. We hear much of "The Higher Criticism." Let the Higher Critics boldly face, not only the facts of the Church's literature, but the facts of the Church's experiences: and let Science escape from the limitations of its prejudices and conceits, and help the Church to recover its lost ground and its forgotten treasures. Then may we hope that the Church of the Future will be at once spiritual and rational, scientific and logical, and find the Church's true vocation as a witness, not only to dogmatic theories, but to the spiritual realities of this wonderful human life. I call upon Dr. Cobb to tell us how this looks to him.' (Applause.)

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE—A SPIRITUAL FORECAST.

The Rev. Dr. Cobb, who was received with loud applause, said that while he regarded Bishop Creighton's luminous definition of the Church ('mankind knowing and fulfilling its destiny') as 'more prophetic of what it is to be, than declaratory of what it is,' it would serve as a guide to the nature of the ideal Church, the Church of the Future. He then propounded four questions, viz., 'What is the destiny of mankind? How is that destiny to be fulfilled? How do we come to a knowledge of what it is? and What obstacles must be removed before the Church can quantitatively become conterminous with mankind?' Dealing with the 'destiny of mankind' he quoted Burns' appropriate lines:—

'But och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear;
And forward, though I cannot see,
I guess and fear';

but with the amendment that, 'the Christian guesses and hopes,' and with the reminder that history is one and indivisible—'the story of how the Eternal Spirit struggles to express itself.' Having pointed out that 'it is the forces at work behind what happens which have in themselves the promise and potency of the life which is to be,' he claimed that 'this truth, of universal import, has one of its most striking manifestations in the sphere of Church history.' There, 'decrees of Councils and Popes, and ecclesiastical events in general, are, as such, nothing but new openings in a game of chess between the priest and the secularist, in which the Christian has but a secondary concern. The real moments of Church history lie deeper, out of sight, and when they appear are of a more startling character.'

The Gnostic movement Dr. Cobb regarded as one of these 'real moments,' and said 'it was more than a philosophy; it

aimed at being a religion, and its driving power was found in its belief that the universe is the Son of God, and that man is akin to the Divine. In this belief was contained a truth which was to shine more and more unto the perfect day '—a day that has yet to come!

Referring to monasticism, Dr. Cobb said that the spirit which gave birth to the monk is identical with that which produced the reformer—both were essentially assertions that the individual is an organ of the Divine and an end in himself. St. Francis of Assisi, 'son of man and child of God, transfigured his century by revealing to it the joyousness and gaiety that are the reward of the soul which gives itself enthusiastically to God,' and his life, 'more valuable to the Church of the Future than to that of his own day,' affords an 'inspiration to the ever-growing proportion of souls who realise that spirit is the one abiding reality, of which all forms are but passing shadows.' What is true of St. Francis is also true of mystics like Eckhart, for they declare 'truths which belong to the eternal now'; the average man, however, 'fears the formless and feels that he is safe only so long as he sticks to rule and holds fast to tradition,' but 'where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty; where there is liberty there is life; and the Church of the Future will be a Church where the life is given by the spirit abundantly.' (Applause.)

Dr. Cobb regarded the Reformation as a vehement protest of the spirit against the cramping and degrading forms into which mediævalism had compelled it. The Reformers, by their action, cut the tap-root of the principle of authority in religion, and though they did not themselves carry out 'the incontestable right of the individual to determine his own religion without man's dictation,' they cleared the way for its ultimate triumph, and ensured for the Church of the Future a spiritual basis, showing that the seat of authority in religion is within the individual who has been born of God. (Hear, hear.)

Referring to the French Revolution, Dr. Cobb said that it led to 'civic freedom, based on individual liberty; the abolition of privilege; the liberation of reason; the sense of brotherhood; in short, the recognition of the rights of man as man.' All these 'have a living connection with the Church that is to be, because the evolution of civilisation shows that a spiritual principle has persistently asserted itself.' The conquest of India, a result of the French Revolution; the Postal Union, the railway, steamboat, telegraph, and telephone, have brought East and West into touch and have quickened the sense of brotherhood; 'and science, while working out the dematerialisation of matter, has crowned itself with the glory of a servant of the spiritual.' All these wonders of our own time led Dr. Cobb to conclude that 'the next age will be one of faith in the spiritual as the one Reality, of which both man and the world around him are shadows.' (Applause.)

Continuing his argument, Dr. Cobb dealt with the evolutionary hypothesis, and claimed that 'there must be affirmed a belief in a *continuum* running through Nature and history alike.' As science has shown that matter is really but a mode of force, and as the only force of whose origin man has first-hand knowledge is certainly of spiritual origin, 'we are being slowly but surely driven back on the old truth, treated by Hume as unprovable, that cosmic force, as a whole, is also to be assigned to a spiritual being as its immediate source.' By its further contribution 'that all Force is one though its modes of working are many and its shapes Protean,' science gives 'for the first time a spiritual view of the world, based on reasoned observation of its manifestations in the phenomenal world,' a result which must give delight to every champion of the spiritual, 'because it shows that the Eternal Spirit is about to inaugurate an era in which spirit shall receive its fitting recognition as the well out of which flow the living waters of joy and peace. The age of rationalism and materialism is in its death-throes. The happy age of the spiritual is coming to birth.' (Applause.)

Dealing with the 'fulfilling of man's destiny,' Dr. Cobb pointed out that 'spirit, as pure spirit, is unthinkable, being outside the reach of experience,' and claimed that it therefore becomes a question as to the forms which the underlying spirit

will 'choose as his own, and that the 'future will grow out of the present.' The works of the artist, 'who tells on glowing canvas, or in burning verse, or living stone, or prophetic word, what he has seen of the spiritual,' will adorn our churches, senate-houses, railway stations, libraries, schools, museums, and picture galleries. 'The names of Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. A. R. Wallace, and others like them, are guarantees for the dawning of a day when the students of the phenomenal will regard themselves as disciples of the spirit,' listening to and interpreting its many voices. They, too, will have their place in the Church of the Future. (Applause.)

'If the art of government,' said Dr. Cobb, 'be to make men happy, then modern Governments must be judged by their failure,' which is to be accounted for by the fact that 'man does not live by bread alone.' 'The idealism of Jesus is the only principle of living which stands unshaken, and when his true Church takes its true place politics will become a department of Church work.' Turning to Theology he said that people decline to take the theologian seriously to-day, and this tacit neglect is more severe than positive condemnation, but, to the theologian 'who can see life steadily and see it whole,' the present surpasses all previous ages in the supply of material. 'The Uniformity of Law, of the Conservation of Energy, the principle of Evolution, the facts of psychic phenomena, the results of the investigations of the science of comparative religion, of anthropology or of biology' are all manifestations of the spiritual and 'call loudly upon the Church of to-day to sift out their chaff and put the wheat into its garner as its legacy to the Church of the Future.' (Applause.)

Referring to 'Public Worship,' Dr. Cobb said that ceremonial 'must be judged by the service it is able to render in the development of the spiritual life of those who use it, and he was of the opinion that:—

'The Church of the Future will not be hide-bound by tradition, nor throttled by the civil power, nor ready to fly at art or the absence of it; she will not call timidity caution, nor cloak prejudice under the name of obedience to law, nor talk of idolatry or of slovenliness at all, but will be so filled with the spirit that she will have no eye for minor differences, and will wonder how earlier days could have thought them of so much importance. Forms of some sort will be retained, but they will be freely chosen, freely kept or abandoned, and always put in their proper place as servants of the spiritual.'

The importance of the inquiry regarding 'man's future destiny' may be seen, said Dr. Cobb, by the fact that it is sometimes alleged that he is destined

'to be burned to a cinder when the earth is hurled into the sun, or frozen to an icicle when she becomes a dead planet; that some assign him to an eternal heaven or an eternal hell in unequal proportions; that some look forward to a reign of reason and ordered hedonism; while yet others stop short with an agnostic credo, having but a single article which says that all things are eternally becoming, and that, therefore, to talk of man's destiny is meaningless.'

In face of this variety the proposition 'that man's destiny is to spiritualise the world by first spiritualising himself' needs justification, and the difficulty consists not only in the fact that 'nothing worth proving can either be proved or disproved, but quite as much in the different capacities of men's minds for truth.' Thus the evil which makes one man a pessimist stimulates the optimism of his neighbour; the truths of science which make one man a materialist drive another to spiritual monism, and 'the evidence which convinces one of the spiritual basis of things only angers another by its apparent visionariness.' After claiming that 'conscience, spiritual imagination, the higher emotions and intuition' must be included in the realm of reason, and that when they are, differences will tend to disappear, Dr. Cobb contended that:—

'The spiritual conception of the world cannot be proved to one whose thoughts are locked up in forms—that truth, in all its radiant beauty, is reserved for those who fulfil the condition of being pure in heart. They see, and therefore neither require proofs themselves, nor can supply them to others. The spirit which has opened their eyes will, as they believe, in due time open the eyes of all.'

With reference to the 'obstacles to be overcome' Dr. Cobb pointed out that 'social and moral evils spring from want of

spiritual life, from blindness to man's essential kinship with the divine, to the belief that the Real is to be found in the things of sense and not in the world behind the veil.' Self-knowledge, when completed, leads to the inner divinity. The man who has found this henceforth 'moves in an ampler aether, a diviner air, and sin ceases to move him.' Such a man 'carries within himself the promise and potency of the social order that is to be; he himself, together with those like him, is the John the Baptist who heralds the Kingdom of God.' (Applause.)

The great obstacle to the realisation of the spiritual is the devil of self-complacency which bids the individual

'be content with what he believes or holds; inspires him with contempt or bitter hatred of his brother's good, and forbids him to reach forward to the things which are before. Its first-fruits are spiritual intolerance and dogmatic harshness and these, when perfected, bring forth sects and churches which are readier with an anathema than with a word of God. . . . If we could rise to the pure air of Godhead and see things *sub specie eternitatis*, how paltry would seem nine-tenths of the ardours of the dogmatic spirit! how cruel or futile a large portion of the historic activities of the Christian Churches!'

Having shown that 'worship is proportioned to spiritual capacity,' the lecturer said that 'new wine demands new wine-skins, and the spirit of life (being essentially anti-dogmatic) requires a Church trusting to the divine life to lead it, keep it, inspire it, crown it.' The proposal to dispense with doctrines enforced by authority may seem mere midsummer madness, but the question here is not of an ecclesiastical body 'but of a Church as a body of persons, born again of the spirit, who know that the Spirit is a spirit of order as well as of life. This Church of the Future will have thrown off the dogmatic spirit as being one of the many disguises of materialism.'

In conclusion Dr. Cobb said:—

'Mankind is beginning to see that its destiny is to rise from the world of form into the world of spirit; it is being shown the high white star of truth, and bidden there to aspire; it is beginning to suspect that its pilgrimage is an unending search for what is higher, and to replace a fixed revelation in the past by a continuous, progressive revelation in past, present, and future; to substitute a dynamic for a static religion; and it is setting about for ways to escape from matter and form in food, social conventions, in international relationships, in civic justice and political change, in freer thinking, in more reverent treatment of the life beyond the grave, in an enlarged sense of duty to man as a son of God (and to animals below man as being God's handiwork also), in a more sympathetic appreciation of the labours, sufferings, and aspirations of bygone generations, in a more modest view of our own worth, and a larger hope for a richer life somewhere and somehow, as far surpassing this our present life as Herbert Spencer surpasses a Hottentot, or a Christ the primeval savage. Mankind, thus feeling, and thus hoping and striving, is the ideal Church—the Church of the Future. The Church of the present is only worthy of the name of Church so far as it is preparing the way for the coming of the better Church, by enabling man that now is to know, and knowing, to fulfil his destiny.' (Loud and continued applause.)

The chairman, the Rev. J. Page Hopps, after a few commendatory words regarding the lecture, proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Rev. Dr. Cobb, which was seconded by Archdeacon Colley, and adopted unanimously, amid applause, and after a question had been put by Dr. Berks T. Hutchinson, the vote was suitably acknowledged by the lecturer, and the proceedings terminated.

PROFESSOR RICHEL ET PHANTOMS.—We learn from the 'Annals of Psychical Science' that the article written by Professor Richet for the organisation 'Potentia' and distributed to various papers, among them the 'Standard,' as mentioned in 'LIGHT' p. 501, contained the following sentence, which was cut out in the version printed by the 'Standard': 'We must, nevertheless, speak of phantoms, for this is the most moving chapter of the whole occult domain. Well, at the risk of being looked upon by my contemporaries as a fool, I believe there are phantoms.' The point at issue is, of course, whether these phantoms and forms can 'be related to beings that have already disappeared.'

LIFE UNLIMITED.

'Life more Abundant' is the title of the latest work by Mr. Henry Wood, a prolific American writer on New Thought, and a strongly intuitive seeker as well as a profound thinker. His central thought is that divine, spiritual Life is the one Reality, in every form of manifestation, dwelling within the whole of Nature, and more fully expressed as the Divine Mind within Man himself. Thus the history of mankind is the story of the unceasing rush of that spiritual current, sweeping Man ever onward towards a goal which he as yet discerns but dimly, but which is none the less the object of his evolution through ages past and to come.

Mr. Wood's presentation of Life as the dominant factor in everything, as the propulsive mainspring of evolution, is scarcely obscured or impeded by the fact that in this volume he has set himself the task of giving to his doctrine a precise application, and using it to explain much that many people feel to be difficult in regard to the Bible and systematic theology in general. He rightly says that 'the literalism and inerrancy which have been put upon the Bible, under a mistaken obligation of loyalty, are burdensome, and largely obliterate its harmony, beauty, and unity.' He welcomes the higher criticism as being 'the study of the Bible in the history and spirit of the time which produced it.' Criticism enables 'the great current of historic development' to be 'intelligently traced and surveyed.' Read in this light, he regards the Bible as 'the exponent of morals and the higher human attainment,' by means of 'ideals held up by many authors in their successive periods,' and showing a constant evolutionary advance, which is still far from being closed. For instance, 'the evolutionary character of the Bible is apparent in the very slow unfolding of ideas of future existence and immortality.' The 'great distances travelled between the early sanction of slavery and polygamy and the indiscriminate slaughter of enemies, to the lofty ideals of the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, and the Fourth Gospel' indicates, not changeability in God, but improvement in men. 'Man grows just in proportion as his consciousness awakens to his own intrinsic divinity and oneness with his Source.' The narratives of the Bible are rather to be read as allegories; even the accounts of the origin and end of the physical body of Jesus only 'belong to the realm of dogmatic interpretations which are, at least, non-essential.'

'The credentials of truth are found in the soul of man,' is our author's comment on the idea that religion depends on a belief in the literal truth of all the marvels related in the Bible. He considers that 'Jesus was not an author, nor an originator, but a demonstrator,' and that his life and teaching lose their greatest value by being isolated from ordinary humanity and represented as unique. 'Salvation consists of the unfolding of the higher part of man, or rather of the real self.' Even theology is secondary to this. 'Full salvation involves the evolution of the spiritual self-consciousness, the building of a soul-structure of imperishable material. The Ego must form an organic union with eternal and living verities.' Jesus tried to bring back men's minds to this conviction, by example and precept, and did not sacrifice himself as an atonement. 'God is eternally reconciled to man, and this gospel, or good news, was the fundamental message of Jesus.'

Brushing away all the extraneous teachings of theologies, we come once more to the broad stream of Life, for ever rushing through and sustaining the universe in every grade of manifestation, whether through matter or as pure spiritual essence to be perceived only by intuition. The assurance of this stream of Life is *faith*, which, as our author says, is no elusive enthusiasm, but a 'mystic energy, boundless in its resources and of wonderful utility.' Spiritual assurance, we are told, is 'an achievement rather than a gift.' It is a power higher than the intellectual faculties, and 'in proportion to its intensity it brings possibility into actuality.'

Since this life current flowing through us is of such mighty power, and of so essentially spiritual a nature, it cannot be

* 'Life more Abundant: Scriptural Truth in Modern Application. By Henry Wood. Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company. Price 10d. 30 cents post free.

dependent on the existence of the physical form, and therefore Mr. Wood, while accepting the statements of Spiritualists as to spirit return, does not base his convictions of a future life on these phenomena alone. But he does not deprecate the attempt to keep up communication with those who have gone before :—

‘If we live in a social universe, and if there is a certainty of love and interest, what more natural than the desire on each side of the line for some real sign or message from the other? If our dear friends cross the Atlantic, do we not rightly seek, and do they not desire to send us, tidings of their welfare and progress? It is our materialism and abnormal ideas of the transition which have put the natural counterparts wide asunder. When we lose friends, let us cultivate the feeling that they are not far away, lost to former ties, interests, and friendly oneness, but, though invisible to our dull organs of sense, are right in our midst as they are drawn or can render service.’

The Bible, says Mr. Wood, refers to spiritual intelligences and states of widely diverse character, both exalted and debased, and every order of character and consciousness is attracted to its own place. Crossing the line makes no one truly spiritual. The various teachings do not indicate that there is to be no progress in the Beyond, but rather ‘that it is to be wrought out through great effort,’ and he hints at ‘grand spiritual activities and ministries of loving service, far-reaching vistas and opportunities for educational advancement, faculties and powers unfolded and exercised, eons of spiritual progression stretching on and upward towards the ultimate goal and Ideal.’ S. G.

GOOD TESTS OF IDENTITY.

At the close of a séance with Mrs. Fairclough Smith, at the rooms of the London Spiritualist Alliance, on October 31st last, I made arrangements for, and attended, a private sitting at her own home, at which sitting I received very convincing tests of spirit identity and return.

For some years past I had been on intimate and friendly terms with a family consisting of a father and mother and grown-up sons and daughters. Some five or six years ago, when the mother was in great distress over the loss of her eldest son, I introduced Spiritualism to her and explained its teachings. We used to get writing through the planchette, and later on this friend developed what is known as automatic writing, her finger moving rapidly and spelling out the words without the aid of a pencil. We used to frequently discuss the naturalness of Spiritualism and the change called death, and she assured me that she would, if possible, appear to me after she had left her body, which change took place some eleven months before my séance with Mrs. Fairclough Smith.

During her lifetime my friend had given me one of her gloves to take to mediums and see what could be told from it, but I had never previously done so. However, while Mrs. Fairclough Smith was in the trance state I placed the glove in her hands, with a request that she would tell me something about the owner, but I did not mention whether the owner was now in the flesh or out of it. The medium's hands soon began to make movements which were characteristic of my friend. She shook hands with me as my friend used to do, and what riveted my instant attention was the fact that she kept twirling one of her rings round on her finger, and then another on the other hand. These movements I at once recognised, for my friend, when in this life, was in the habit of making them when sitting down thinking or chatting quietly. Then the medium moved the forefinger of her right hand about as if doing the automatic spirit writing. It was as if the control wished to say, ‘You see it is I, do you remember this?’ She spoke to me through Mrs. Smith in her own tone of voice and asked if I did not recognise it. She said that her husband (also in the spirit world) sent his love to me, a thing he frequently did during his lifetime; that those on the other side were helping me, and that she stood at the back of me at her funeral (which I had not mentioned to the medium); and on my asking why she came to me instead of going to her own children, she explained that it was because I looked upon

her as alive, while her children thought of her as dead, which made it more difficult for her to approach them.

The youngest daughter of my friend had told me that, during the night after her mother's funeral, while staying at the house of a relative, she suddenly seemed to see a figure draped in black, which the mother had been wearing just before her decease. I, therefore, asked my friend, through Mrs. Smith, if it was she who had appeared to her daughter (who is not a believer in Spiritualism), and was told ‘yes’; that she had first gone to the house where they lived, but finding her daughter gone, she went to the place where she was staying. On asking the spirit why she did not go to her son, to whom she was greatly devoted, she said that owing to his great grief she was unable to do so at first, but had visited him at times since. She assured me that she was often with me, as also was a spirit daughter who interested herself in me, but whom I had never met, as she passed on before I became acquainted with the family.

On my asking the spirit what she felt like since passing on, and if life on the other side seemed quite natural, she said it seemed natural, but she felt lighter and well. I was also told through Mrs. Smith that my friend used to suffer from pains in the head, and that she had died from an internal complaint, all of which was quite true. I asked if she had any message for her children, and she said, ‘Give them all my love,’ and then added, truly, ‘They don't believe I can return.’ She asked me if I remembered the little chats and sittings we used to have at her house, and said she would come again and talk, and asked me to keep the glove and bring it with me another time. The spirit's identity was quite clear to me without her name being given, but for more complete satisfaction, and especially to convince others, I asked my friend for her name, and she gave her first name correctly; then I asked for the name of her husband, which she also gave correctly. I think, therefore, that I can claim to have received satisfactory test evidences of spirit identity and return.

LINDSAY CORSON.

6, Fairholme-road, West Kensington, W.

DREAMS AND THE ‘ASTRAL BODY.’

A recent review in ‘LIGHT,’ of an article by Mr. A. P. Sinnett, on ‘Dreams,’ stated that during the sleep of the physical body, consciousness was transferred to or focussed in the ‘astral’ body, the astral body being able to leave the physical and visit distant places, and possibly to convey to the physical brain consciousness, or impressions, of what the man had witnessed or done while functioning in the astral vehicle, though this was not usually the case. In respect to this question, perhaps the following relation of facts might be of interest.

A year ago I was residing in St. Louis, U.S.A., and often discussed with a friend the phenomena of Spiritualism, clairvoyance and allied subjects. Later, my friend, a journalist, wishing a larger field for his energies, I strongly advised him to go to Chicago, and upon his deciding to do so I advised him at the first opportunity to visit a Mr. R., a noted psychic in Chicago, who would be able to foretell the degree of success he might have before him there. On bidding him farewell, my last words to him were, ‘Now be sure to go to see Mr. R., as he can see into the future; I know what he can do.’ Two weeks later I received a letter from my friend, from which I quote the following, as I still possess the letter :—

‘Mr. R. is a wonder! I was at his séance last week, but went too late to get a psychometric test, but I saw and heard enough to greatly interest me. So last night I went again and the reading he gave me from my written and folded question was marvellous. I had written the question, “How soon shall I get work, and what will be the extent of my success while in Chicago?” This I had folded and laid on the table with from sixty to seventy others. When he came to my question, which he picked up without opening, he said, “This person is a little impatient at present about securing a position. You are always asking yourself, ‘How long will it be before I get work? what kind of work will it be?’ and all such questions. Now you must not worry, because you are going to get work very soon, and your success in this city will be very good.”

Mr. R. then hesitated a little and continued, "I hear a name and I cannot make it out. It sounds like 'William.' No, it's 'Walter.' This person, it seems, advised you to come to Chicago, and said to you, 'Now when you get to Chicago be sure and go to see Mr. R.' This person is still in earth-life—he is not yet 'dead,' he comes to me in an 'astral' condition and tells me all this. He says he told you this, and his name is Walter Smith. This person is in St. Louis right now, and it was in that city that he advised you to come here."

"I could hardly wait until Mr. R. asked whose paper it was. When he did so, I was on my feet in a moment. He asked if I recognised anything of the reading, and I told him just how true it all was. "And I was there when he told you that, wasn't I?" he remarked with a laugh."

So far I quote from my friend's letter.

Now that very Sunday night that my friend went to Mr. R.'s circle, I, being very tired, had gone to sleep unusually early, about 7 p.m., and so was in ample time to be at Mr. R.'s séance, which commenced at eight o'clock, in my astral body, as seen and heard by Mr. R., no doubt being drawn thither by my friend's strong thoughts of me.

I did not, however, have any recollection whatever of the occurrence on awakening, and was greatly surprised, on receiving my friend's letter, to hear of the flying visit I had paid to Mr. R. in Chicago, which is nearly three hundred miles from St. Louis.

WALTER SMITH.

.27, Elm-road, East Sheen.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents and sometimes publishes what he does not agree with for the purpose of presenting views that may elicit discussion.

'Ahrinziman' Publication Fund.

SIR,—Although in my recent article on behalf of the author of 'A Wanderer in the Spirit Lands' I made no special appeal for funds, I have been in receipt of letters from so many persons begging to be allowed to contribute some help to one who, in her previous works, had given them so much profit and pleasure, that I have been moved to start in your columns a special fund, headed as above, to assist the author in the way which I am sure would most meet the approval of one who, like her, has her heart in her work rather than in herself.

My scheme is to employ any fund so raised in the following way, so that it will not only benefit her permanently in her psychic art, but act in perpetuity as a benefit to others similarly situated. The help offered by the generous friend previously alluded to, along with any fresh contributions, shall be put together as a special fund to be held in trust by the President or Treasurer of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited. With this fund a first edition of 2,000 or 3,000 copies shall be ordered, as it may permit. To secure the American copyright the printing and binding are to be done in the United States; of these two-thirds are to be kept in America for the American edition and one-third to be sent over here for the British one. The net profits of the American edition are to go directly to the author and she is to pay for and hold all moulds, blocks, and copyrights in her own right. But the net profits of the British edition are to be held by the trustee for the redemption of all the sums paid over in publishing this first edition, and whatever sums accrue therefrom are again to be placed to an 'Ahrinziman Publishing Fund,' upon which the author may draw for the expenses of a second edition or for the publication of any new work emanating from the same source of inspiration, provided a division of this new edition be made on the same principle, so as to ensure the redemption of this new expenditure. Each time the fund is restored she can draw upon it again for similar purposes. In this way all her life she will be secure and able to publish any work she may wish to give to the world. On her death, or whenever she no longer wishes to avail herself of the privilege, the Council of the Alliance may then allot the privilege to some other poor and deserving psychic in similar circumstances. I therefore ask contributions for the above useful scheme from all who are prompted to assist, whether in this country or in America. The smallest contributions will be acceptable. They may be remitted to me at the address below and will be duly acknowledged in 'LIGHT.'

FREDERIC THURSTAN.

Riverfield, Old Windsor.

'The Problem of Evil.'

SIR,—I should like to lay before your readers, in strong contrast, two systems of religious philosophy.

The churches and theologians have taught, for centuries, that man was created pure but fell into evil ways, some say through his own inherent perversity, others through being tempted of the devil; (how a pure being could at the same time be perverse or capable of yielding to temptation is left unexplained). This fall into sin being displeasing to God, and being an unlooked-for development, He sent His Son to take upon Himself the sins of the world and thus redeem mankind.

Sin, sorrow, and suffering they regard as the result of this fall; the two latter they allow to have a certain beneficial effect upon character, but the former, sin, they consider as absolutely evil and unpardonable unless repented of, and all three they assert to be inconsistent with the goodness of God, and, therefore, extraneous to His nature, something to be banished altogether out of the world; that will be banished in the good time coming. Vain expectation!

Contrast with this the teachings of Spiritualism—man undergoing a gradual evolution from the animal plane; sin, sorrow, &c., being God's benign method of raising up free-willed man to angelhood, the only means by which a free-willed being could evolve, and convincing proof of God's love and tenderness, being the blessed levers that raise man aloft.

God reigns alone and supreme; but at the same time highly developed spiritual beings appear constantly on earth as teachers and exemplars to their fellow mortals.

A candid and unbiassed examination of these two systems can surely only lead rational and thoughtful people to one conclusion—unequivocal support of the latter and rejection of the former; the more so when it is realised that the former is responsible for the fear of death, the dread of some vindictive punishment in the next life for the sins of this, a dread that has caused so much useless torture to human beings. There is no punishment for sin but that involved in progress and learning our lesson.

Los Angeles, Cal., U. S. A.
September 29th, 1905.

A. K. VENNING.

P. S.—I have just been reading a review of 'De Profundis' and 'Ballad of Reading Gaol,' in which Oscar Wilde says that 'sin and suffering are beautiful, holy things, and modes of perfection.' First-class evidence this from one who should surely know. The books must be worth reading.

Mrs. Green in Natal.

SIR,—The friends of Mrs. Ellen Green among the readers of 'LIGHT' will be pleased to know of her safe arrival at Durban, South Africa, on Sunday, October 22nd, where she was met and welcomed on landing by a large party of members of the society and friends. In the evening, at the Good Templars' Hall, the chairman (Mr. W. Knox) introduced Mrs. Green to the audience, about four hundred people, but as Mrs. Green had been unwell for several days she was not able to lecture, and Mr. W. Utton (president) delivered a good trance address, after which Mrs. Green spoke for about ten minutes, briefly outlining her mission to South Africa, and was heartily applauded. On Wednesday, October 25th, a *soirée* was held, at which Mrs. Green was accorded an official welcome, and presented with a handsome bouquet by the president's daughter. The president introduced Mrs. Green to the society, and read the different credentials which she had brought with her. A programme of songs, &c., was gone through, and Mrs. Green gave clairvoyant descriptions, nearly all of which were instantly recognised. On Friday, October 27th, Mrs. Green's controls delivered their first address, entitled 'The Mission of Spiritualism,' to a crowded audience, who applauded very heartily, and her clairvoyant descriptions afterwards were, with but two exceptions, readily recognised. Mrs. Green has already quite established herself in the hearts of all here, and I feel confident that she will be kept busy, and that very great results will follow on her labours among us. Mrs. Green has asked me to convey her greetings to all at home, and to tell them that she has received a right royal welcome from the workers here.

WM. T. UTTON,
Hon. Sec. Durban Spiritualist Society.

P. O. Box 534,
Durban, Natal.

Bright's Disease.

SIR,—Can any of your readers tell me of a case of Bright's disease (even in its early stages) being cured by spiritual or mental healing, or by mesmerism?

14, King-street, Weymouth.

F. J. POYNER.

A Catechism.

SIR,—Mr. Mould is quite certain that his interpretation of the Athanasian Creed is right and mine wrong; but I should have more confidence in his judgment if I were sure that he knew the correct answers to the following questions:—

1. When was the Creed in question written?
2. In what language?
3. What was the word used in that language where our version uses 'person'?
4. Whether that word can be properly rendered 'person' as implying a distinct individuality?
5. Who were the 'Unitarians,' and where they lived, whom that Creed was meant to propitiate?
6. In what way it was calculated to propitiate them if it taught the doctrine of three separate individuals co-existing in the Godhead?

How Mr. Mould ascertained that the amount of attention I gave to the article on a 'Secondary Personality' when reading it was inadequate, is a mystery to me. When two readers, say, 'M.' and 'G.,' peruse a certain article and arrive at different views as to its meaning, 'M.' has no logical right to draw the inference that his reading was done with greater attention, and that of 'G.' with less. There are other ways of explaining such a phenomenon.

E. D. GIRDLESTONE.

Sutton Coldfield.

'The Bonds of Earth are Loosened.'

SIR,—We recently lost a darling child, a baby girl born to us in June, 1904, a bright and intelligent child, possessing a beautiful loving nature which greatly endeared her both to my wife and myself, and who, we fondly hoped, would have fulfilled the promise of her babyhood as she grew up. She passed away peacefully at the age of fifteen months, succumbing to an infantile complaint which carries off numbers of little English children born in Egypt.

Twenty-one days after the close of her brief earth life, my wife received, as we sat at the breakfast table, a message from a former 'guide' who has not come to her since she left London more than five years ago. It was simple and brief—only six words, 'The bonds of earth are loosened.' The attachment between parents and child was so strong that we had considered it probable that ere long we should feel the presence of the little one and, perhaps, be able to learn something of her life in the unseen. But apparently this will not be the case, and we can only heartily rejoice that, while we shall treasure the memory of the brief visit, and wonder more than ever at its purpose, not in the least understanding its why and wherefore, we can feel the assurance that our little Mary is removed from all earth attractions and is free to progress in the higher life, tended only by ministering angels. For this is what we understand from the brief message, and we would not wish it otherwise.

THOS. ATWOOD.

Alexandria, Egypt.

Spiritualist Fund of Benevolence.

SIR,—Kindly allow me to acknowledge receipt of sums as below, and to thank subscribers for their support of the Fund of Benevolence, which, at this time of the year especially, is of the utmost service to the poor and needy workers in the movement.

Some letters which I have written to former subscribers have been returned as the old addresses are no longer correct. Will any friends who have removed, and who, therefore, have not been notified of the desirability of a renewal of their subscriptions, kindly note this and forward their usual amounts? Funds are most urgently needed. Will Spiritualists everywhere please realise this?

WILL PHILLIPS,

18, Corporation-street, Manchester.

Hon. Sec.

Amounts received in October: W. Appleyard, Esq., and Mrs. Appleyard, £2 2s.; G. E. Gunn, Esq., 10s. 6d.—Total, £2 12s. 6d.

'Meetings for Inquirers.'

SIR,—Permit me to express the pleasure it gave me to see in 'LIGHT' of November 11th that Mrs. Effie Bathe was again opening her hospitable doors for the benefit of inquirers. I was privileged to be present at many of her last series of At Homes, and can testify to the help they gave to the seeker after truth.

What a worthy example this estimable lady sets for other experienced Spiritualists to follow!

W. E. A.

'Inquirers and Inquiries.'

SIR,—In reference to the apparent contradictions between different spirit utterances mentioned by 'Circumpice,' in 'LIGHT' of November 11th, I think we should remember that conditions in the spirit world are probably more dependent on the state of the inhabitants of that world than is the case here. We may think that a question addressed to them admits of only one reply, and yet it may not really be so. Even in this life people's impressions with regard to the same circumstances differ considerably. In the old story, 'Eyes and No Eyes,' two boys are sent to take the same walk. One finds it very dull, the other sees some new object of interest at every turn. Again, the old travel-books of a century ago were eloquent on the terrifying wildness and awe-inspiring grandeur of places which the modern tourist passes through and merely says 'It's really very pretty!' I am inclined to imagine that the difference in opinion caused by difference in mental state may be far more pronounced in the spirit world than here. Even in regard to the question of sin and passions in the other life, it may be that both replies may be true, but of different individuals; a desire almost overcome in life may be no longer a temptation when the means for gratifying it are left behind; but if it is still strong in the nature the absence of gratification may increase the torment of the desire. At the same time I think there is a great deal of truth in the contention that spirits communicating through mediums find their faculties clouded or confused by the difficulties of the process.

SEEKER.

SOCIETY WORK.

Notices of future events which do not exceed twenty-five words may be added to reports if accompanied by six penny stamps, but all such notices which exceed twenty-five words must be inserted in our advertising columns.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold a conference at Clapham Institute on Sunday, December 3rd. Speakers: At 3 p.m., Mr. J. Adams; at 7 p.m., Messrs. G. T. Gwinn and J. Adams.

THE UNION OF LONDON SPIRITUALISTS will hold a conference at Little Ilford, Third Avenue, on Sunday, December 3rd. Speakers: At 3 p.m., Mr. R. Boddington; at 6.30 p.m., Messrs. W. E. Long and R. Boddington.

BATTERSEA PARK-ROAD.—HENLEY-STREET.—On Sunday Mr. Frank Clarke, of Clapham, gave an excellent address on 'Freethought and Salvation,' and gave good advice regarding the Sunday morning public circle. On Sunday next, Mrs. Podmore. On Sunday, December 3rd, Mr. Macdonald Moore.

BRIXTON.—8, MAYALL-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. R. Boddington gave an interesting address on 'Man as a Spiritual Being in All Times,' and answered questions. A good after-meeting followed. On Sunday next Mr. Walker will give a trance address and clairvoyant descriptions.—J. P.

NOTTING HILL.—141, LADBROKE-GROVE, W.—The meetings here are growing in interest and in numbers. On the 12th inst. Dr. Berks Hutchinson, of Cape Town, interested his audience in his discourse on 'The Zodiac.' On November 26th a social tea meeting at 6 p.m. will be followed by a lecture at 7 p.m.—M. L. R.

FULHAM.—COLVEY HALL, 25, FERNHURST-ROAD, S.W.—On Sunday last Mr. Abbott's striking and eloquent address on the 'Larger Law' was much appreciated and a wish was expressed to hear him again soon. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Mr. Webb. On Saturday, December 2nd, at 7 p.m., a plain and fancy dress ball.—W. T.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.—73, BECKLOW-ROAD, ASKEW-ROAD, W.—On Sunday last Mrs. Symonds' interesting address on 'The Higher Culture of Humanity' was much appreciated by a crowded audience. Mr. Plant presided. A large after-circle was held. On Sunday next, at 7 p.m., Miss Violet Burton. On Monday next, at 8 p.m., clairvoyant descriptions.—W. C.

CHISWICK.—AVENUE HALL, 300, HIGH-ROAD.—On Sunday last Mr. Adams gave a grand address to an appreciative audience. On Monday, Mr. Paul Preys lectured on 'Dual Consciousness,' and gave phrenological readings. On Sunday next, at 11 a.m., circle; at 7 p.m., Mrs. Effie Bathe, 'The Soul-body of Man.' Soloists, Madame Leslie Dale, R.A.M. Monday, at 8 p.m., Miss Lynn, clairvoyante.—H. G. H.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51, MORTIMER-STREET, W.—On Sunday evening last Mr. E. W. Wallis gave a deeply interesting address to a crowded and appreciative audience on 'To Right the Wrong,' treating the subject in a very able and stirring manner. Mr. W. T. Cooper, president, was chairman. On Sunday next, Miss MacCreddie will give clairvoyant descriptions. Doors open at 6.30 p.m. Early attendance is necessary.—S. J. W.